

The Best Living: R.T. Jones

Robert Trent Jones Sr. was the leading vote-getter among living golf course architects in the survey asking for the best architect of all time. Larry Dennis, who worked with Jones on Jones' book "Golf's Magnificent Challenge," shares this piece.

BY LARRY DENNIS

Jack Nicklaus stood on the first tee at Muirfield Village Golf Club on a summer day in 1974 and surveyed the rolling, wooded Ohio landscape. Nicklaus the player and friend Tom Weiskopf were about to start the official opening round at Muirfield, the dream course of Nicklaus the architect. The architect then made a prescient observation.

"It's not hard," Nicklaus admitted, "to design a great course on land like this with an unlimited budget."

Of course it's not. Assuming the designer has even a modicum of expertise, the task with good land is basically to avoid screwing it up. The holes are there. The beauty is there. Just find it all.

Muirfield Vilalge, favored by its

terrain and, at inception, enough money to do it right, has gone on to rank among the world's best courses. Others are not so lucky at birth. Nature created the first courses, at St. Andrews and the other Scotland links. Nowadays man must do it, and many, if not most, venues leave something to be desired.

Herbert Warren Wind, the peerless golf historian, once noted: "I think it's the easiest thing in the world to criticize a finished course... But it's helpful if one occasionally sees a golf course before it is finished. When you see it in its rough, rude form, the land-

scape that the golf course architect takes over tells you something. I've been frightened a great deal when I've walked out and seen the land that certain friends had to work with — part of it swamp, no natural features in sight and the worst sort of trees. On top of it, the man has a low budget to work with ... You wonder how he is going to get it so that the featureless land really plays, and when you return to this land and see what he's done with it, then you can appreciate the work that the professional architect is able to do."

Every architect knows the feel-

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GCN's first survey

Several stories dealing with *Golf Course News'* year-end architects' survey appear in this issue and more are on the way.

The course designers chose Tom Fazio as 1989's Architect of the Year. Rees Jones finished second. Arthur Hills, Ed Seay, Jack Nicklaus and Jay Moorish tied for third.

Donald Ross and Alister Mackenzie were 1-2 in the Best Architect in History category. They were followed by A.W. Tillinghast, Robert Trent Jones, Sr., Dick Wilson and Stanley Thompson.

Wadsworth Construction Co. was the runaway winner for Best Builder of 1989. Golf Course Consultants, Landscapes Unlimited and Paul Clute followed.

Cypress Point edged out Pinehurst No. 2 as the Best Course. Others receiving multiple votes were Pine Valley, Pebble Beach, Augusta National, Banff Springs and Shinnecock Hills.

We'd like to thank those who took the time to respond to the survey and look forward to working with you in the future.

Jones took golf around world, says Perry Dye

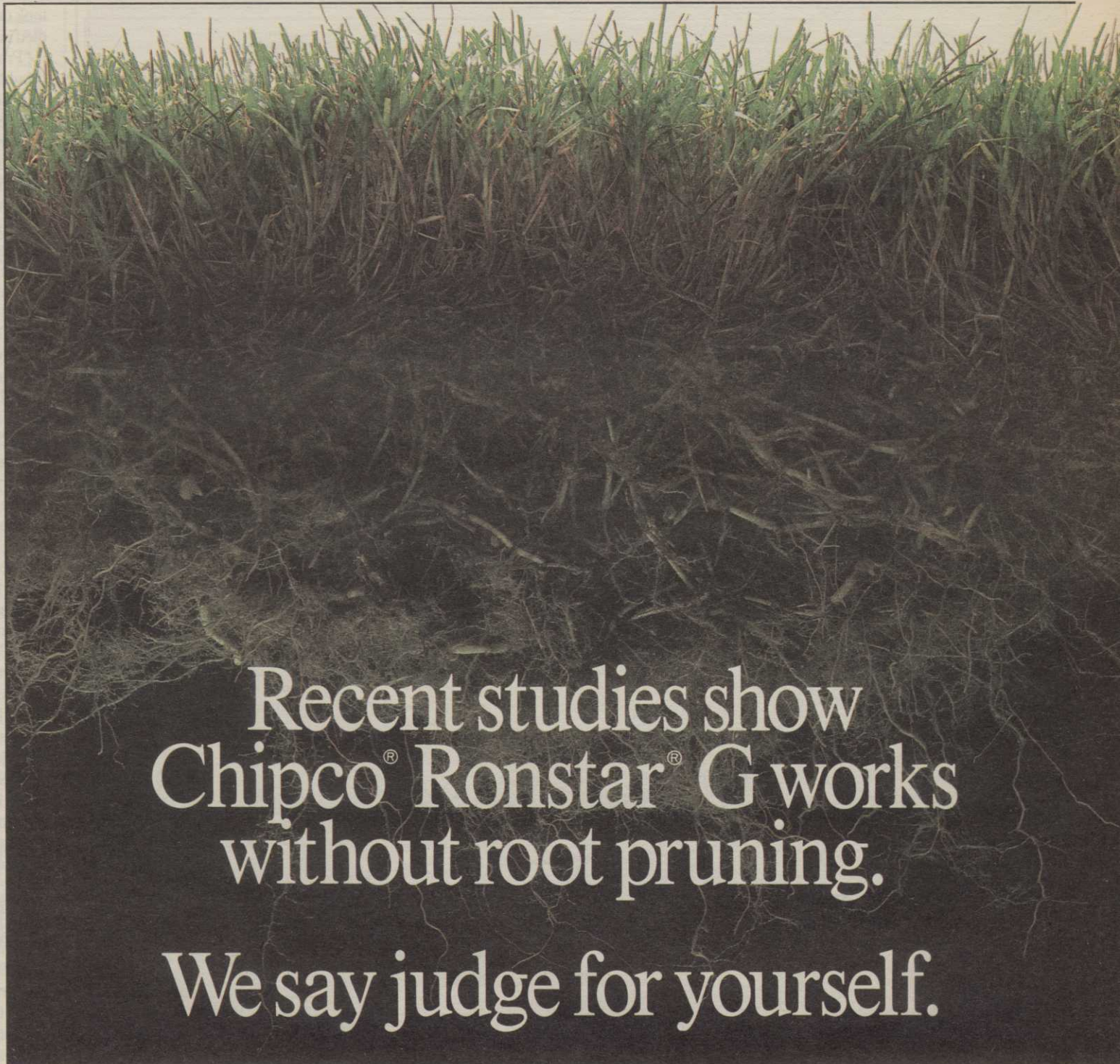
The president of the Golf Course Builders of America laid upon the shoulders of Robert Trent Jones Sr. the credit for taking golf around the globe.

"If it weren't for him it really wouldn't be a world-wide game," said Perry Dye of Dye Design Inc. in Denver, Colo. "He's the one who took it around the world. My dad's (architect Pete) done an unbelievable job domestically but Mr. Jones took it around the world ... after the Scotsmen of the 1920s."

Dye cited Jones' extensive travels when "with the assistance of the military, the World Bank and the development concept, he developed 600 golf courses during a 20-year period.

"Really, nobody has done that since then, so whatever exposure golf got (around the world) as far as design, architecture and construction are concerned was done once, by him," Dye said.

"These were sometimes small islands, small countries. But he stopped by and built a golf course and started the game there. And now they've built up a golf population," he said.



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